

Subject Area: Mathematics

Grade Level(s): All Levels

Title of Instructional Method, Strategy, or Approach: Mnemonic Strategies

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, mnemonics can be defined as a “technique for improving the memory.” Mnemonic instruction can be associated with enhancing one’s memory to connect new and previously learned information. This instructional strategy has been commonly used among students with disabilities; however, it is also widely used among students in the regular education setting as well. The real benefit of mnemonic instruction is that it works for students of all ages. As a child, one may remember using such mnemonic strategies such as HOMES, which represents the great lakes—Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, and Superior. And then in college, one may still create mnemonic strategies to help remember key information for a test or quiz. Studies also have shown that students who have utilized mnemonic strategies have had higher comprehension achievements. The results seem endless for all students, which means teaching mnemonic strategies should be essential in the classroom.

References in APA format:

1. Access Center, The. (2006). Using mnemonic instruction to teach math. Retrieved August 26, 2007, from <http://www.ldonline.org/article/13717>.
2. Bafile, C. (2005). “You must remember this”...Teaching with Mnemonics. Retrieved August 26, 2007, from http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev117.shtml.
3. Greene, G. (1999). Mnemonic multiplication fact instruction for students with learning

“How-To” Information – What will make this work in the classroom? What would a teacher need to know to implement this Instructional Method, Strategy, or Approach?

Mnemonic strategies can work with just about any mathematical process that the students need to know. To create a mnemonic strategy you must:

1. List all the processes needed to complete the mathematical process in the correct order.
2. Take an initial to help remember the step for each process (ex – Addition would use an A, Subtraction an S, and so forth)
3. If the initials spell a word, you can use that (ex – FOIL [first, outer, inner, last helps remember how to factor]) or you can make up a saying for the initials such as **P**lease **E**xcuse **M**y **D**earest **A**unt **S**ally stands for parentheses, exponents, multiplication, division, addition, and subtraction, which is the order of operations when working on an algebraic equation.

4. Teach the students the mathematical process while also teaching them the helpful hints to remember which order the process needs to be completed. This will help the students to remember the order of the mathematic processes to complete the equation.

Implications for Practice/Other Considerations:

Pros-

- Can be used for all ages
- Proved to work especially well for children with learning disabilities as evidenced by The Council for Exceptional Children
- Used with any subject

Cons-

- Memorizing the mnemonic device itself

Additional Links (for further information):

1. The Access Center, (2006). *Using mnemonic instruction to teach math.*
<http://www.k8accesscenter.org>
2. http://www.ldonline.org/indepth/teachingmnemonic_strategies.html
3. <http://teachers.net/gazette/AUG00/poll.html>

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